



SUMMER 2006

INSIDE

- > Rev Up Your Engines to Go Cruisin'
- > Taking Pride in Place Along Gratiot
- > Who's New on the Avenue

the Avenue

O N T H E A V E N U E

New Life on Gratiot

Gratiot Avenue in Clinton Township is getting a new lease on life, thanks to the ongoing work of the township's Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The DDA has completed a comprehensive and highly interactive public involvement planning and design process to create a Gratiot Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Plan.

tremendous opportunity for business and residential development along Gratiot," says DDA member Bill Lee, who for many years owned the Bill Lee Oldsmobile dealership between 14 and 15 Mile Roads on Gratiot. "The DDA will work hard over time to create spaces that will attract people and make

"There is a tremendous opportunity for business and residential development along Gratiot..."

A new branch of National City Bank opened its doors this spring along Gratiot just north of Metropolitan Parkway. Representatives from the Central Macomb Chamber of Commerce, the Clinton Township Downtown Development Authority and the Charter Township of Clinton gathered for the ribbon cutting.



Bill Lee
DDA member

The plan encompasses a three-mile segment of M-3 Gratiot Avenue from 14 Mile Road to Wellington Crescent (the southernmost city limit of Mount Clemens).

The planning process included a series of focus group meetings and public hearings with business leaders, private citizens and government officials. "There is a

them want to visit the Gratiot area." Lee's dealership has subsequently been purchased by Baker College, which now uses the updated facility as an Automotive Technology Center.

(con't on back)

Rev Up Your Engines to Go Cruisin'



Fourth Annual Clinton Township Gratiot Cruise A Classic DDA Event



One of the most widely recognized events organized for the DDA is the annual Clinton Township Gratiot Cruise. This year the event is scheduled to be held from noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday, August 6 and will cover a five-mile cruise loop from 14 Mile Road to north of Metropolitan Parkway. The event was especially designed to highlight the township's DDA and the more than 150 businesses along the cruise route.

"Last year's event attracted more than 75,000 participants and spectators who displayed their classic vehicles, took part in a variety of cruise related parties and events, and just generally had a good time," says Cruise chairperson Tom Tignanelli. "This is the biggest single event in the township, and can be a tremendous boon to area recognition and business improvement."

The family-oriented event features a host of children's activities that have become the hallmark of the Gratiot Cruise. A parade of kid-driven pedal cars that are sponsored by local businesses kicks off the event. Children's games, clown shows and music also dot the cruise loop in front of various businesses. Last year more than 40 youngsters took part in the parade, which is under the close supervision of the Clinton Township Police Department.

For additional information, go to the township website at clintontownship-mi.gov or the official cruise website: clintongratiotcruise.com.

Taking Pride in Place Along Gratiot

Gratiot Avenue is a well-known landmark in Metropolitan Detroit. Originally an Indian trail through the wilderness, the roadway was surveyed by the U.S. Army in 1827, from Fort Wayne in Detroit to Fort Gratiot in Port Huron. Beginning in 1850, a toll of one cent per horse was charged when the roadway was lined with planks.

More than 150 years later, in excess of 70,000 vehicles daily travel Gratiot in Clinton Township. The corridor has become a magnet for residential and business growth that offers a wealth of shopping, dining, retail, entertainment and educational opportunities.

"Gratiot is one of the most traveled thoroughfares in Clinton Township," says Mario Lavinio of Mario's Body Shop. "Businesses on this side of town have an excellent opportunity to grab the attention of thousands of residents and commuters on a daily basis. It's an opportunity we as business owners can't afford to miss."

A new Development Plan for the Gratiot Corridor created by the Clinton Township Downtown Development Authority proposes numerous ways to help local business owners take advantage of the potential sales opportunities that pass by their doors on a daily basis.

Promoting the unique vitality of Gratiot in Clinton

Much of what makes a business district a special experience is the personal relationships between the businesses and their customers. This can often be accomplished by designing a "sense of place" along the Gratiot corridor.

"We want to encourage future developments that complement the existing character of the neighborhoods that are immediately adjacent to Gratiot," says Planning and Community Development Assistant Director Joe Silbernagel. "Ideally, new development should be attractive, attract pedestrian traffic, and provide space for retail growth."

Some of the specific projects targeted by the DDA include:

- A new welcome sign at 14 Mile and Gratiot scheduled for installation later this summer
- Landscaped sidewalks with bike accommodations
- A landscaped and irrigated median at 14 Mile
- Well-lit pedestrian walkways along the entire corridor

"Many of these projects can be accomplished in a relatively short period of time," added Carlo Santia, Director of Planning. "More comprehensive goals such as creating mixed-use developments, added residential opportunities along Gratiot, and even the creation of a comprehensive streetscape design for buildings along the corridor will all take more time. But the effort, everyone should agree, will be well worth it."

New Sign in the Works for DDA

Clinton Township's Downtown Development Authority is making plans to install a new sign for the business area at 14 Mile Road and Gratiot. A temporary sign was constructed following a traffic accident in the median along Gratiot. Township residents and business owners are invited to submit their ideas for the new sign, which is now only in its conceptual stage. For further information, contact Carlo Santia, Director of Planning and Community Development at 586-286-9325.

Good News!

Congratulations to the **Alibi Inn** (33025 S. Gratiot Avenue, 586-791-3562) for celebrating 60 years of business in Clinton Township. Since September of 1945, the Boothman family has been serving great food and libations at the corner of Gratiot and 14 Mile Road. Mark and Ruth Boothman opened the establishment 60 years ago, and today, their daughter Shirley Boothman and granddaughter Connie Luedke run the place, as well as **Don Carlos Mexican Kitchen** (586-791-9120) next door.

Makin' Waves

Bruno's Scuba & Hockey Shop (34740 Gratiot Avenue, 586-792-2040) is planning to make waves this year with the opening of a new pool complex, **The Beach** (34736 Gratiot Avenue, 586-792-2040), in April. The Beach will offer hydrotherapy, low-impact aerobics, off-ice training for hockey players, an aqua jogger fitness program, water aerobics, Aqua Flex for seniors, rehab programs, swimming lessons and Old Time Mineral Baths in Mount Clemens, along with diving and snorkeling.



WHO'S NEW ON THE AVENUE

New Neighbors

Gratiot Avenue isn't what it used to be — it's better than ever. Everywhere you look there are new businesses, new buildings and new faces on old favorites. Since its founding in 2002, Clinton Township DDA has welcomed a number of new neighbors, including:

- Advicon
- Baker College
- Flagstar Bank
- Gordon Food Service
- Lowe's
- Moran Chevrolet
- National City Bank
- Quiznos Sub
- Secretary of State
- Super!Center
- Sound Security
- St. Vincent DePaul
- Thrift Store
- Tim Hortons
- Walgreens

These new businesses bring additional commercial traffic to Clinton Township, provide new jobs, increase property values and enhance our business district. Stop in and see what they have to offer!



About the Clinton Township Downtown Development Authority

What is the purpose of a Downtown Development Authority?

The State of Michigan passed the Downtown Development Authority Act (PA 197 of 1975) to give municipalities a tool for improving the quality of downtown and business areas. Clinton Township created its DDA in 2001 with the intention of it becoming an influential catalyst for the revitalization of the Gratiot corridor from 14 Mile Road north to Wellington Crescent.

Is there a Vision or Mission Statement for the Clinton Township Downtown Development Authority?

The mission for the Clinton Township DDA is to undertake public improvements that have the greatest impact in strengthening the area and attracting new private investments.

How is the DDA funded?

The DDA is a quasi-public agency that diverts a portion of property tax revenues from properties in the district for public improvements. This is not a special assessment, and DDA property owners do not pay any additional taxes. Instead, the DDA redirects increases in future property assessments generated by property value escalation for projects that benefit the Gratiot area directly. It's important to note that no other property tax funds from other areas of the township are used to subsidize the Gratiot area improvements made under the DDA.

Who administers the DDA?

The work of the DDA is currently conducted by a small staff in the township's Planning and Community Development Department and a board of 16 citizens appointed by the township's Board of Trustees. These individuals volunteer their time, talent and expertise to the DDA for the benefit of the Gratiot area. DDA members work through committees to accomplish the goals of the DDA.



"We already have a tremendous foundation for growth in the area..."

Carolyn Dorian
DDA member

"Businesses on this side of town have an excellent opportunity to grab the attention of thousands of residents and commuters on a daily basis."

Mario Lavinio
DDA Member



New Life on Gratiot (con't from front)

The Gratiot redevelopment plan positions Clinton Township as a leader in Michigan's urban land-use initiatives. It integrates ongoing community participation and provides immediate strategies for corridor beautification. "Ideally, we want to create development and redevelopment projects based on specific needs of our citizens, while developing guidelines for site designs and streetscapes that attract people," says Carlo Santia, Clinton Township Director of Planning and Community Development. "If we begin to define Gratiot Avenue and its businesses around people and their needs....we will get more people."

The Clinton Township Downtown Development Authority aims to implement a plan that will inspire community support for efforts to improve the appearance, operation and revenue generation of the Gratiot Avenue business district. "We already have a tremendous foundation for growth in the area," says DDA member Carolyn Dorian. "We have restaurants, retail, a library and even a technical automotive training facility in the district. Naturally we are looking for additional growth in the number of businesses. But just as important, we want to dramatically enhance the beauty of the area to attract more shoppers, visitors and potential residents."

Anyone wishing to view the Gratiot Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Plan may obtain an electronic copy on disk at the Clinton Township Department of Planning and Community Development, 40700 Romeo Plank Road in Clinton Township.

Additional DDA information can be viewed at clintontownship-mi.gov.



40700 Romeo Plank Road
Clinton Township, MI 48038

DDA Website Under Construction

DDA members are invited to list their businesses on a new DDA website for the south Gratiot business community. Please forward the following information to carolyn@dorianford.com:
The name of the business,
address, phone number,
website link and e-mail address.

August

Gratiot Cruise
Sunday, August 6 Noon - 6 p.m.

September

Sidewalk Sale